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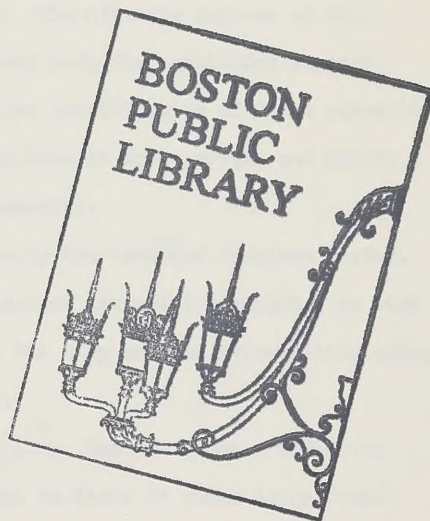
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RENEWING THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT -
A PARTNERSHIP OF BUSINESS AND CITY GOVERNMENT



CITIZEN
[1962]



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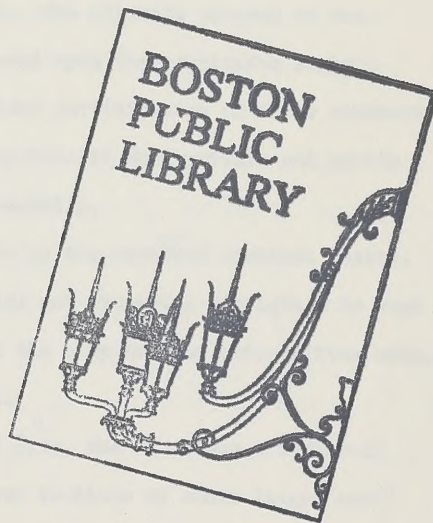
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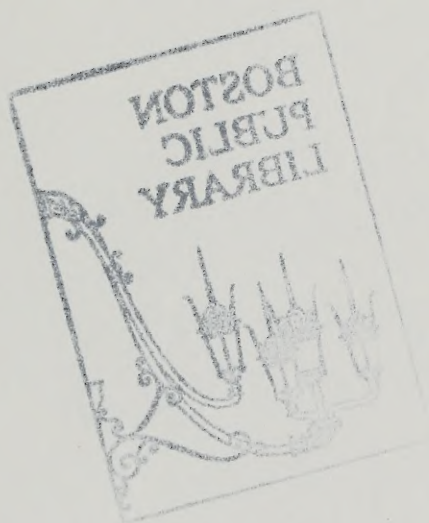
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RENEWING THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT -
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2
Reviewing the Central Business District - A Partnership of Business and City Government

One of the most important projects included in Boston's \$90,000,000 Development Program is the Central Business District urban renewal project. ^{refurbishing} The ~~refurbishing~~ of this area is vital to the strengthening of the economic base of the entire city.

One of the heartening and encouraging aspects of efforts to improve the Central Business District has been the enthusiastic support and participation of leaders of the business community. The ^{story} ~~story~~ of the revitalization of this District has been one of a partnership between the business community and City government. The ultimate success of this exciting venture will very likely depend upon the continuing support of these private citizens. The voluntary participation of these community leaders illustrates how well a city may benefit when private and public groups join forces to improve their community.

The Central Business District lies in the ^{center} ~~center~~ of Downtown Boston. It is the heart of the City's commercial and financial strength. As such it is the business center not only for the city and its metropolitan area, but for the New England region as well.

Lying in the center of a very old ^{city} ~~city~~, the CBD faces a number of serious problems similar to the downtown sections of other large "core" cities. The District is beset by heavy traffic congestion, aggravated by the narrowness and irregular patterns of many streets. Inadequate parking facilities have caused downtown merchants to feel the growing competition of suburban ^{an increasing} "shopping centers obtaining a growing proportion of total metropolitan sales.

¶ The area is heavily built up, with many obsolescent buildings, particularly on the fringes of the area, and has many small and irregularly shaped blocks which heighten traffic congestion now and which discourage suitable new development. While property taxes are presently very high, assessed valuations range from \$12 to \$70 per square foot within the district, further illustrating the loss of economic value to Boston from blight and obsolescence.

The Central Business District has many strengths, however. It is well located, well served by rapid transit, and rich in historical sites. Perhaps its greatest strength lies in the leadership being exerted by Boston's business leaders in the efforts to revive the Central Business District.

For more than a year, frequent consultations were held between Mayor John F. Collins, leaders of the business community, and Boston Redevelopment Authority staff to determine the best manner of proceeding with this important project. Businessmen organized the Committee for the Central Business District, Inc. They raised their own funds, appointed their own staff and opened an office. The committee has also raised funds to hire as a planning consultant Victor Gruen Associates to undertake a preliminary plan for the Central Business District.

In order to establish a sound working framework for the planning and execution of the Central Business District project, a Memorandum of Understanding was approved and executed by the Mayor, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the Committee for the Central Business District.

The Memorandum provides for the continued close cooperation on this project.

It recognizes the importance of the Committee in serving as a liaison to keep all businessmen within the District informed of planning activities.

The Memorandum ~~not only~~ assures the business community of an active part in the renewal planning process ^{aged} but also provides that no ^{the a} renewal plan ^{meeting}

^{then specific objectives will} ~~which they oppose will~~ ultimately be selected.

For the Mayor and the

Boston Redevelopment Authority, it assures that any plan ultimately pro-

posed will have the support of the business community and will be feasible

financially and in other respects.

In August, 1962, the Boston Redevelopment Authority approved an ap-
plication for survey and planning funds of ^{approximately} ~~over~~ \$1,500,000. The Federal

Grant reservation would amount to more than \$19,000,000. The Boston City

Council approved the application in September after a hearing in which lead-
ing businessmen declared their support of the project.

At the present time, the Survey and Planning Application is being
reviewed by Federal authorities. In the meantime ^{planning planning} work is going forward

with the close cooperation of all parties.

